

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Non-Final Office Action mailed July 20, 2004. Claims 1-30 were examined in the Office Action. Claims 1-7, 10-15, 18-23, and 25-30 were rejected. Claims 8, 9, 16, 17, and 24 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 8, 9, 16, 17, and 24 have been rewritten in independent form as amended claim 1, new claim 31, amended claim 11, new claim 32, and amended claim 21 respectively to overcome the objections outlined in the Office Action. Claims 7-8, 15-16, 23-24, and 26-30 have been canceled. New claims 31 and 32 have been added as the rewritten independent form of objected to claims 9 and 17. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and examination in view of the remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7, 10-15, 18-23, and 25-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by Houser et al., (U.S. Patent No. 5,774,859, hereinafter "Houser"). Independent claims 1, 11, and 21 have been amended to incorporate the features of allowable claims 8, 16, and 24 respectively including any intervening claims. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that amended claims 1, 11, and 21 are allowable over Houser.

At least because claims 2-6 and 9-10, 12-14 and 17-20, and 22 and 25 incorporate the features of amended independent claims 1, 11, and 21 respectively, claims 2-6 and 9-10, 12-14 and 17-20, and 22 and 25 are also allowable over Houser. Dependent claims 3, 9, 12, 17, and 22 have been amended for consistency in view of amended claims 1, 11, and 21.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD, LLC

Date: October 19, 2004

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